

# **City of Seattle – 2009-2012 Consolidated Plan for Housing and Community Development**

## **Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)**

### **What does the Consolidated Plan do?**

The Consolidated Plan represents an agreement between the City of Seattle and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) that guides grant expenditures of approximately **\$21 million** in four federal grants. The four federal grant programs covered in this 2009-2012 Consolidated Plan are:

- Community Development Block Grant (CDBG)
- HOME Investment Partnership
- Emergency Shelter Grant Program (ESGP)
- Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDS (HOPWA)

### **What do those four federal grants do for Seattle communities?**

During 2007, Consolidated Plan funds:

- Preserved or produced 417 units of affordable rental housing
- Helped 61 families purchase their first homes
- Moved 972 homeless households into transitional or permanent housing
- Averted housing loss (evictions) for 784 households
- Provided \$8.8 million in CDBG-secured loans to three community and economic development projects
- Helped develop 21,500 square feet of commercial or community space for businesses and neighborhoods
- Provided \$2.5 million in loans to four businesses in the Rainier Valley to promote community revitalization

### **What does the data say about the needs of Seattle's communities and residents?**

Much of our analysis confirms trends that are already informally discussed by community members:

- Seattle's strengthening economy over the last five years has led to rising land values and residential and commercial rents. These increases pose a challenge for many residents seeking affordable housing and affordable commercial space for businesses, particularly small businesses located in

previously under-invested neighborhoods such as the Central Area, the International District, Rainier Valley, and Delridge.

- Due in part to rising rents, approximately 19% of renters in Seattle now pay more than half their income for rent (approximately 21,400 households - not including one-person student households). These renters are severely burdened by this cost and at risk of losing their housing. Paying such high rents makes it very difficult for these renters to afford other household expenses---at a time when food, transportation, and many other critical needs are increasing in price.
- According to a Forbes.com July, 17, 2008 article, "Seattle's 3.7% unemployment rate, well under the national average of 5.5%, would normally be a good thing. But a growing economy with low unemployment drives up wages and costs. The Emerald City's consumer prices are up 5.8% from this time last year, which ties for the highest inflation rate in the country with Dallas, where high energy costs for home cooling and driving are eating up incomes."
- In the past eight years, Seattle home prices have risen dramatically but wages have seen significantly less growth. From 2000 to 2008, the average single-family home price increased 77%, from \$316,800 to \$559,300. From 2000 to 2008, the average condo increased 62%, from \$244,050 to \$396,150. Meanwhile, the annual salary of the average Seattle worker increased only 31%, from \$49,000 to \$64,000 in the same period.
- Link Light Rail construction along Martin Luther King Jr. Way South was substantially completed at the end of 2007 and many of the neighborhood's businesses are in a fragile and vulnerable state as a result of the length and depth of the construction impacts that interrupted their business activities.
- In Seattle's Central Area, Delridge/Southwest Seattle, Chinatown/International District, and Rainier Valley/Southeast Seattle neighborhoods, new mixed-use and commercial economic development projects that meet both affordable housing and commercial needs cannot generally be developed feasibly without support from a public financing or assistance program.
- The *Safe Harbors* Homeless Management Information System shows more than 9,000 uniquely identified and unduplicated people received services from participating publicly funded emergency shelters and transitional housing programs in King County in 2007.
- There were 6,320 King County residents living with HIV or AIDS at the beginning of 2008, of whom approximately 80%, or 5,047 live in Seattle.
- Housing assistance and housing-related services are among the greatest unmet need identified by persons living with HIV/AIDS, according to data from the 2007 Comprehensive HIV Needs Assessment compiled by

Seattle/King County Public Health. Assessment data estimates that more than 1,036 people living with AIDS need assistance finding housing and/or emergency, short-term or ongoing rental assistance.

- In 2007, a total of 981 individuals were served through domestic violence shelter/transitional housing/motel voucher programs in Seattle and King County. Fully 25% of those in the emergency system were young children aged 0-5 years. Another 1,165 adults (who may or may not have entered shelter) received counseling through Domestic Violence Community Advocacy programs throughout King County. Even though emergency shelter and transitional housing capacity has increased for victims of domestic violence in recent years, shelter turn-away rates continue to rise. The duplicated turn-away rate for Seattle and King County averages 18 to 1.

### **How will the City spend the \$21 million over the next four years?**

The 2009-2012 Consolidated Plan reflects ongoing commitments, begun in 2006, to support the regional Ten-Year Plan to End Homelessness and the completion of the adopted Southeast Seattle Neighborhood Revitalization Strategy Area plan. The Consolidated Plan identifies the current use of federal CDBG, ESG, HOME and HOPWA primarily in the following areas:

- Public services targeted to homeless families and individuals guided by the Ten-Year Plan to End Homelessness (\$7 million)
- Building, acquiring and/or rehabilitating low-income housing through private nonprofit and public housing developers (\$7.9 million)
- Encouraging economic development through neighborhood revitalization investments and small business loans, including the Rainier Valley NRSA (\$5 million)
- Facility improvement loans to community nonprofits whose work benefits low- and moderate-income Seattle households (\$400,000)
- Administration and management (\$1 million)

### **How did the City come up with the strategies in the Plan?**

The City of Seattle is fortunate to draw on a wealth of internally and externally developed plans to guide the creation of strategies and funding priorities to meet community needs. ***Integration of priorities identified from these community-based plans into this Consolidated Plan offers the advantages of avoiding redundant planning processes, enhancing coordination and leveraging of***

***funds among the multiple federal, state and local resources used by the City and its partners*** to create the housing and service network, and honoring the staff expertise and stakeholder and consumer feedback embedded in these established plans.

A partial listing of plans referenced by or integrated into the 2009-2012 Consolidated Plan includes:

- Seattle/King County Domestic Violence Regional Council Plan
- Seattle/King County Area Agency on Aging 2008-2011 Strategic Plan
- State Department of Veterans' Affairs 2009 Strategic Plan
- Seattle/King County Public Health Plan
- Office of Economic Development - Southeast Seattle Action Agenda
- Office of Housing – 2009 Levy Needs Assessment
- Human Services Department - 2009 Updated Strategic Investment Plan
- City of Seattle Analysis of Impediments to Affordable Housing
- City of Seattle Growth Management Plan & Annual Amendments
- A Roof Over Every Bed: Our Community's Ten-Year Plan to End Homelessness in King County
- Seattle Housing Authority – Annual Plan
- Women's Funding Alliance – Four County strategies for Women and Children
- United Way – Addressing Chronic Homelessness
- CEH - Report on Homeless Youth and Young Adults

### **How could the Consolidated Plan affect my interests?**

The 2009-2012 Consolidated Plan talks about the needs of homeless, very low-income households and up to moderate-income households. The Housing Market section lays out what we know about the cost burden on renters and homeowners in Seattle and what we think may happen over the next four years that will affect availability of affordable housing in the region. Public housing issues are also included in the proposed strategies.

The Four-Year Strategies Matrix provides an overall picture of the types of programs and who may benefit from the City's allocation of federal, state and local funds. The federal funds allocated through these programs are combined with over **\$68 million annually** to health and human services through its General Fund and the Families and Education Levy. Additionally, Seattle voters have approved for **16 consecutive years over \$242 million** in local Housing Levy funds to provide affordable housing opportunities for low-income Seattle residents. Similarly, lending from CDBG Section 108, Float Loan and Equity Fund provides necessary gap financing to stimulate private housing, commercial and mixed-use development. Oftentimes, projects are infeasible without this public sector involvement. From 2001 to 2007, the City invested **\$37,487,134** in economic development projects that resulted in 728 new residential units and 255,803 square feet of commercial space. In all, the actions taken through the Consolidated Plan can have wide-ranging impacts on Seattle residents and communities.

**Let us know what you think!**

**The 2009-2012 Consolidated Plan is available online at**  
**[http://www.seattle.gov/humanservices/community\\_development/conplan/2009/plan/default.htm](http://www.seattle.gov/humanservices/community_development/conplan/2009/plan/default.htm).**

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